

# what's up?

## INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WHO CARE ABOUT TEENS

### What's it all about?

As a nation, we don't always move our bodies as much as we need to and this applies to teens as well. There are also a few other issues that affect a teen's level of activity. Some teens enjoy and participate in sports, but some may feel awkward about their bodies. They don't want to look clumsy in front of their peers. So every teen needs his or her own type of physical activity. Some might prefer non-competitive alternatives like aerobics, jogging, biking or skating. The good news is, as long as they are moving it counts!

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) reports that social support from family and friends has been "consistently and positively related to regular physical activity." So as an adult in a teen's life, it's time to get cracking! Read on!

### Why does it matter?

- The habits formed in youth DO make a difference when we get older. Staying fit lowers the risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes—the leading causes of premature death.
- Physical activity helps self-esteem and reduces stress. It promotes a positive self-image and a sense of achievement.
- Regular physical activity helps teens learn to meet challenges.
- The benefits of physical activity are remarkable:
  - weight control
  - lower blood pressure
  - lower cholesterol
  - improved cardiovascular system
  - increased energy and stamina
  - stronger immune system
  - increased suppleness and flexibility
  - stronger, more toned muscles
  - stronger bones.

### What are the facts?

- Washington state teens in grades 9 through 12 exceeded the Healthy People 2010 goal (30%) for moderate exercise, and they exercised more than the average U.S. teen. About 35% reported engaging in moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes, 5 or more days of the past week.
- Nearly 70% of Washington teens in grades 9 through 12 reported engaging in vigorous physical activity for 20 minutes at least 3 times a week.
- 56% of Washington students surveyed from grades 9 through 12 said they did strengthening exercises at least 3 days a week.
- 44.2% of Washington state teens in grades 9 through 12 participated in daily physical education classes.
- Boys are more likely to take physical education classes than girls.
- Girls are at more risk for not engaging in physical activity than boys, especially strengthening exercises and vigorous activity.
- The CDC reports that nearly half of American youths ages 12–21 are not vigorously active on a regular basis.
- Participation in all types of physical activity tends to decline as age or grade in school increases.
- Daily enrollment in physical education classes dropped from 42% to 25% among high school students between 1991 and 1995, then stabilized at 29% in 1999.

## ADOLESCENT PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INFORMATION FOR ADULTS WHO CARE ABOUT TEENS

### What can I do?

As an adult in a teen's life, you can jump in and make a difference.

- Get involved as a participant or spectator. When a parent enjoys physical activities regularly, teens are more likely to follow suit.
- Provide options, from organized team sports to individual activities like skating, biking and snow sports.
- Encourage teens to develop a physical activity program that they enjoy.

### What the U.S. Surgeon General recommends:

Moderate physical activity—equivalent to brisk walking—30 minutes a day, at least 10 minutes at a time, 5 or more days a week. For cardiovascular fitness, engage in vigorous physical activity for at least 20 minutes a day, 3 to 5 days each week.

### What else can I do?

As an adult who can influence school and community actions, you can:

- Work with community groups and city staff to identify and promote, repair or build sidewalks and bike paths, especially within two miles of all schools.
- Support the development and maintenance of safe community parks and playfields.
- Work with school districts to assure that school gyms, pools and tracks are open to individuals before and after school hours, evenings and weekends.
- Provide information to teachers on how to incorporate physical activity into their lessons.
- Encourage school district policies that require every student to take a physical education class each day with a minimum of 30 minutes of movement.
- Support full implementation of the "Health and Fitness Essential Academic Learning Requirements" developed as part of Washington's Education Reform Act.



**hot  
links!**

Be Healthy. Be Active.  
Washington Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity  
[www.beactive.org/adoles.html](http://www.beactive.org/adoles.html)

Best Practices to Promote Physical Activity  
Washington State Department of Health  
[www.doh.wa.gov/HERE/howto/images/BPPPhys.html](http://www.doh.wa.gov/HERE/howto/images/BPPPhys.html)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/adoles.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/sgr/adoles.htm)

Exercise and Your Teenager  
[www.childcare2000.com/safety/g7.htm](http://www.childcare2000.com/safety/g7.htm)

American Academy of Pediatrics, Sports and Your Child  
[www.aap.org/family/sports.htm](http://www.aap.org/family/sports.htm)

Washington State Youth Risk Behavior Survey 1999  
Published August 2000 by the Washington State Department of Health  
[www.doh.wa.gov/publicat/publications.htm](http://www.doh.wa.gov/publicat/publications.htm)

Washington State Department of Health  
DOH Pub 910-118 11/2000

For persons with disabilities, this document  
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